Writing for Soprano

Dory Hayley Sonic Boom Workshop October 16, 2022 Range and tessitura Setting text Extended technique



Most Comfortable Range Text most audible here Comfortable High Notes Good for climaxes, emotional moments Use sparingly

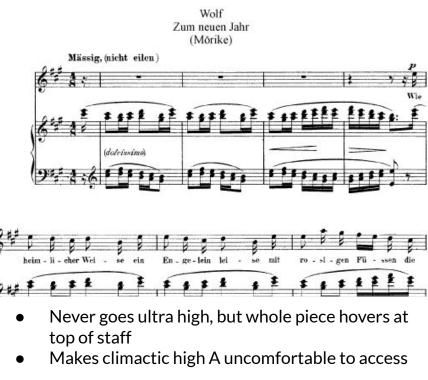
Mostly write here!

Normal Range

Don't expect text to be understood **Extreme High Notes** **ONLY use for specific purpose after consultation** **Comfortable Low Notes** Use sparingly **Extreme Low Notes** Use very sparingly Will be very soft

Tessitura

- "The part of the vocal register in which most of a voice part lies"
- Average pitch
- The right tessitura gives a voice most beautiful and characteristic timbre
 - Too high feels tight
 - Too low feels heavy
- Think of tessitura as home base







Wolf - Mörike Songs





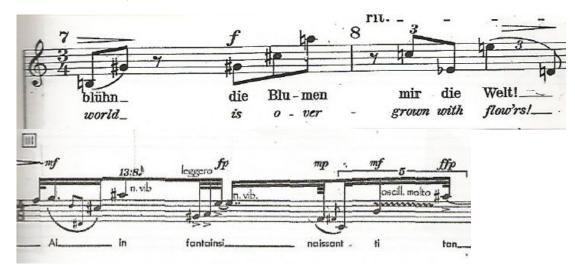


 Low tessitura for soprano, but sparse texture makes it manageable



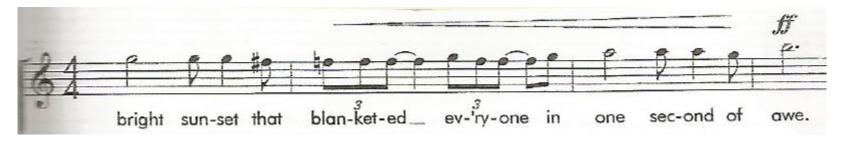
 Low tessitura plus dense, roiling texture makes this uncomfortable

Comfortable



I love leaps! (especially for approaching the top)

Uncomfortable



Anton Webern: Drei Lieder, op. 25



Setting Text

Setting Text

- Read text aloud
- Use metric accent, pitch contour, duration to mirror natural text rhythm and accents
 - Unless you don't want to!
- Use high notes to mark climax or important/emotional parts in text
- Keep in mind
 - Voice naturally increases in volume as you ascend
 - Open vowels [a] and [o] produce better climactic high notes than [i] and [e]
 - Diction less clear above the passaggio
 - Careful of dense/busy piano textures with lots of text
 - Timbre brighter as you ascend

Extended Vocal Techniques

Extended Technique Ideas

- Phonemes
- Vowel slides/oscillation
- Tongue clicks
- Cheek slaps
- Lip pops
- Lip trill
- Tongue trill
- Vocal fry
- Whistling/half whistling
- Body percussion
- Extra percussion
- Experiment with timbre
- Theatricality/stage directions

Camilo Mendez: Plegaria Muda 1

- Phonemes
- Whispering
- Humming
- Tongue clicks
- Lip pops
- Vowel oscillation
- Vocal fry
- Glissando



Helmut Lachenmann: ...got lost...

- Modified whistling
- Voiced consonants
- Exhales/inhales
- Tongue trills
- Tongue clicks
- Cheek slaps



Cathy Berberian: Stripsody

- Graphic notation
- Onomatopoeia
- Timbral experimentation



Two Golden Rules of Extended Technique!

Anything goes! BUT:

- 1. Be careful of textures (extended techniques softer than singing)
- 2. DO NOT write anything on the inhale EXCEPT with prior consultation

Questions?

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